

**WBC BRIEFING NOTES**

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**WESTERN DIVISION  
30 November 1954**

**THE 28 NOVEMBER STATE ELECTIONS IN BAVARIA AND HESSE**

**I. The Bavaria and Hesse state elections (28 November) show these developments:**

**A. Up to closing days, campaigns plugged mostly local issues.**

- 1. Religion in education**
- 2. Local government scandals**
- 3. Treatment of displaced persons**
- 4. Release of prisoners of War and War criminals**

**B. Issue of Chancellor Adenauer's foreign policies entered campaign toward end.**

- 1. Results generally sustained Adenauer on foreign policy, rearmament.**
- 2. Adenauer's rebellious coalition partners, the Free Democrats and the Refugee Party, failed to administer the sharp rebuke to his policy on the Saar that they had hoped.**
- 3. Social Democrats - major opponents rearmament - didn't improve position.**

**C. While there were slight increases in the Communist vote, these increases were not significant enough to enable the Communists to obtain representation in either Hesse or Bavaria.**

**D. Although Adenauer's Christian Democrats did less well than in the 1953 national elections, they showed gains over their vote in the previous state elections in 1950.**

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- E. The composition of the Bundesrat (Upper House) will not be affected to the detriment of Adenauer's coalition.

## II. Bavarian State Elections:

- A. The Christian Democrats have established a clearly dominant position in Bavaria. It now seems probable that the coalition government of the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats will continue until 1958.
- B. Of the other parties in Adenauer's coalition the Refugee Party showed slight gains and the Free Democratic Party, which based much of its campaign on opposition to the Saar agreement, failed to increase its vote.
- C. The Social Democrats barely maintained their voting strength in the election.

## III. Hesse State Elections:

- A. Attacks on Adenauer's foreign policy and opposition to rearmament in Hesse came mainly from the Socialists. The Free Democrats had informally agreed to play down issues dividing themselves from the Christian Democrats in order to campaign more effectively against the Socialists.
- B. The Social Democrats lost their previous majority in the Landtag.

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C. The Christian Democrats have improved their position enough in Hesse to increase the possibility of overthrowing the Socialist government there.

1. This could be done with the cooperation of the Free Democrats and the Refugee Party. (24 plus 21 plus 7 seats = 52 out of total of 96 seats)
2. A more likely combination, however, would be a coalition of the Socialists and Refugee Party (44 plus 7 seats = 51 out of total of 96 seats)
3. Although the Refugee Party cooperated with the Socialists in the campaign and has, on numerous occasions, supported it in the Landtag, it could be pressured by its national organization into supporting a Christian Democratic-Free Democratic coalition.

IV. The West Berlin election of 5 December is expected to result in a stable coalition of the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats.

A. The death of Mayor Reuter in September 1953 ended the grand coalition of Christian Democrats, Socialists and Free Democrats which he had headed since 1945.

1. A new coalition, headed by Christian Democratic Mayor Walther Schreiber, and comprised of Christian Democrats and Free Democrats, has been in office since December 1953.

2. The Socialists went into the opposition.

B. In the 5 December election the Social Democrats are expected to maintain their position as the largest

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party in West Berlin but will probably not regain the majority which they lost in 1950.

1. The Socialists have a traditionally well-disciplined organization; they are backed by organized labor whose support for Adenauer's policies is less solid than it was two years ago.
2. Reportedly doing quiet door-to-door electioneering.
3. Bread-and-butter issues play a more important role in West Berlin politics now that the period of emergency brought on by the blockade has passed.
4. Socialist leader Otto Suhr hopes to become mayor if the Christian Democratic-Socialist coalition is established.

C. The Christian Democrats are expected to increase their strength considerably over the 1950 election.

1. Mayor Walther Schreiber's moderately progressive administration, has been popular in West Berlin.
2. Irresponsible behavior of the coalition Free Democratic Party will probably enable the Christian Democrats to win some Free Democratic votes.

D. The Free Democrats are expected to lose much of their right-wing support to the German Party, which has a chance of obtaining the necessary five percent of the total vote needed for representation in the Berlin House of Representatives.

1. The West Berlin German Party, with a history of right-wing radicalism, [REDACTED]

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2. It has recently become more openly nationalistic and neo-Nazi in its behavior.
  3. Incidents at its meetings involving mistreatment of foreign press officials have evoked a resolution of censure from the Berlin House of Representatives.
  4. If the German Party should obtain representation, it could be of considerable nuisance value and a target for Soviet and East German propaganda attacks on West Berlin's government.
- E. The Socialist Unity Party, under the direction of the East German Communists, is not expected to obtain any representation in the legislature.
- F. There is actually little difference between the foreign and domestic policy positions of moderate elements of the Christian Democratic Party and the Socialists, and leaders of both parties are reportedly looking forward to the establishment of a joint coalition for the next four years.

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